

new*name* 



SEXTORTION DISCUSSION GUIDE

WELCOME TO THE DISCUSSION GUIDE

Thank you for joining us in our mission to bring awareness to Sextortion and show the next generation how to navigate these very real situations. In this workbook we have outlined the story and take away points to make it as easy as possible to convey this important life lesson. Remember to encourage questions and discussion. Be aware that this topic can make young adults uncomfortable, so simply focus on creating a safe space for them so they can absorb the information.

DEFINE SEXTORTION

“A serious crime that occurs when someone threatens to distribute your private and sensitive material if you don’t provide them images of a sexual nature, sexual favors, or money.” (www.fbi.gov)

WHAT

This guide provides a framework for facilitating discussion around the topic of sextortion. (Time Needed: minimum 40 min)

WHO

It is intended to be used with small groups of teens (10 or fewer) and facilitated by adults. We recommend that participants be grouped by gender.

HOW

1. Students will hear the story of Julie, Romeo and Dale, three teens who unintentionally become involved in a sextortion scandal. The story is told in three phases, with opportunities for discussion built into each phase. Discussion questions are designed to allow students to predict what will happen next in the story, to share personal experiences if interested, and to consider what short-term and long-term consequences each character in the story may face.

2. Students are invited to identify points at which each character in the story could have sought support and/or made a more informed choice to avoid negative consequences.

3. Students are given a method to determine who in their lives are “Trusted” people from whom they can seek support should they find themselves in an uncomfortable situation.

WHY

1. To provide safe opportunities for teens to engage in conversation regarding sextortion

2. To inform teens about the short-term and long-term consequences of engaging in sextortion behaviors

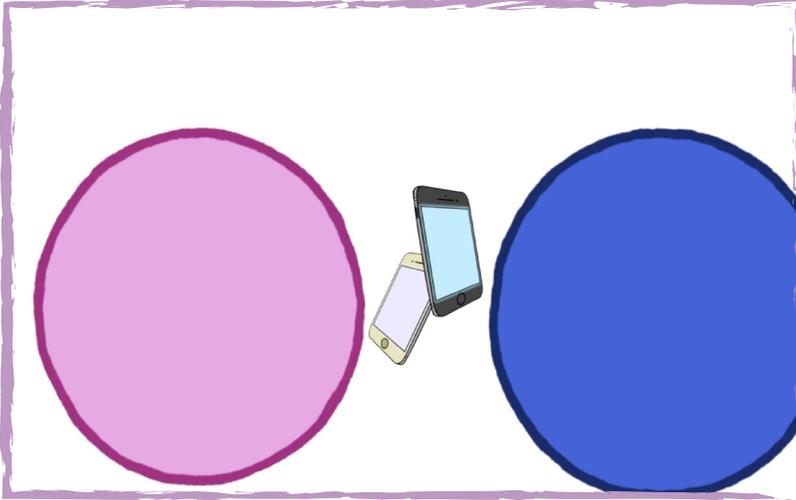
3. To connect teens with resources and trusted people

FACILITATOR TIPS

- Position the group in a circle to allow for safer, more participatory discussion.
- Ensure the discussion space is quiet, private and free of distractions.
- Set aside a minimum of 40 minutes for this discussion. Have a plan for how teens can continue this guided discussion at a later time if needed. Communicate this follow up plan clearly to the teens.
- Look for signs of distress in a teen whose stress response may be activated by this discussion.
- Communicate with teens about who the “Trusted” people are within your organization (ie. counselors, teachers, coaches, church leaders, etc.).

FACILITATOR SCRIPT AND DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Phase 1: Internal Consequences: Crossing Uncomfortable Boundaries (2 minutes)



Julie and Romeo are freshman students at the same high school. Romeo is on the JV football team. A few weeks after school starts, they meet at a Friday night football game and add each other on Snapchat.

Julie has a crush on Romeo, so later that weekend she snaps a cute selfie. It only takes a few minutes for him to chat back: Nice. He responds with his own picture, a snap of his shirtless abs with the caption: Your Turn.

Julie giggles, embarrassed, but also excited that he's interested in her. She takes a picture with her shirt pulled down over her shoulder, but deletes it. Then she takes one that shows more cleavage, and finally deletes that, too. She's in high school now and boys expect to see skin. She takes off the shirt and sends a picture in her bra. It only shows her from the stomach up, no worse than a bikini.

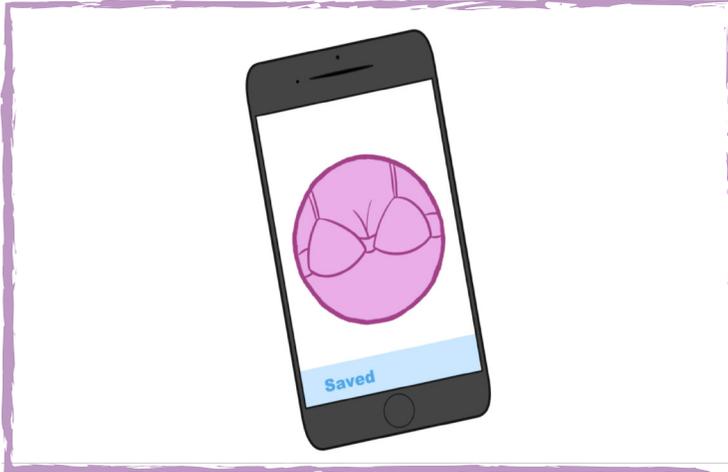
What could be the harm?

DISCUSSION (5 minutes)

- What could be the harm in snapping this photo to Romeo?
- Why do you think Julie feels comfortable sending the photo?

FACILITATOR SCRIPT AND DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Phase 2: Immediate Social/Emotional Consequences (1 minute)



Romeo screenshots the snap. On Monday, when he's in the locker room getting ready for football practice, he shows the screenshot to his best friend. He's surprised Julie sent the picture and he's hoping to get some advice on how he should ask her out. "I didn't even ask her to send it! What do I do next?"

Dale, an 18-year-old varsity football player, overheard the conversation. "You guys talking about Julie Smith? She's a freshman, right?" Romeo ignores him, but his friend

confirms. "Yeah, she sent Romeo a bra shot after the game."

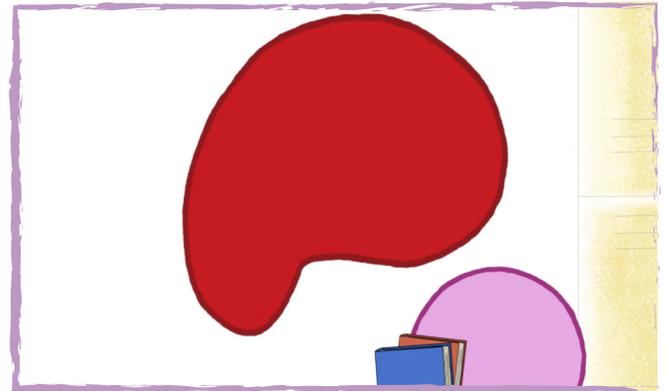
DISCUSSION (5 minutes)

- What do you think will happen next?
- What makes you think that?

On Tuesday, Dale seeks out Julie in the hallway between classes. "I heard you're sending pics around," he says. "When can I get one?" Julie's face turns red and she tries to walk away. How does he already know? "I don't even know what you're talking about. I gotta get to class."

But Dale follows her and grabs her by the arm. He pulls her close to him and whispers in her ear, "Listen, I've got the screenshot on my phone and can share it with my whole contact list... or you can send me a nude. You decide."

The idea of Dale sharing the picture of Julie in her bra with everyone on his contact list is enough to make her sick. She doesn't want to, but she sends a nude picture to Dale anyway. Dale screenshots it right away and then forwards it in a text thread he has with a bunch of his buddies from the football team. A few of them pass it to other friends that go to different schools. None of the boys even think twice.



By the following day, nearly 40 people have access to Julie's nude photo.

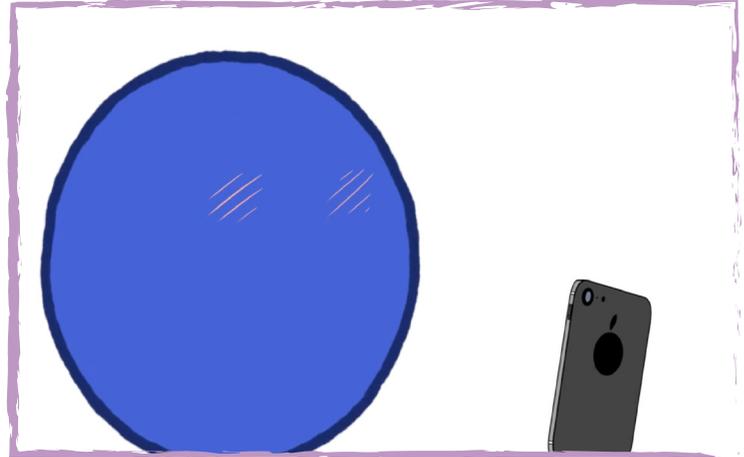
DISCUSSION (5 minutes)

- What do you think Julie will do when she finds out?
- What do you think Romeo will do when he finds out?
- Will Dale get caught?

FACILITATOR SCRIPT AND DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

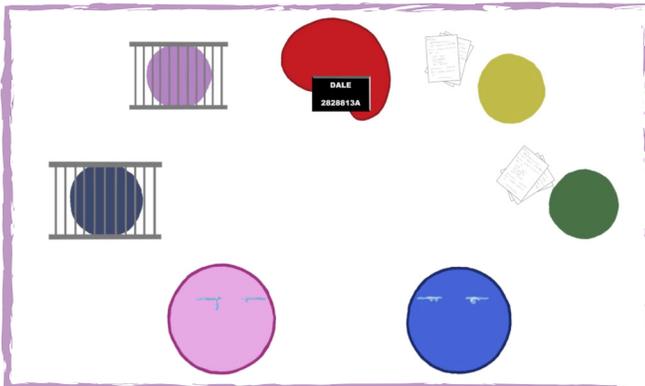
Phase 3: Long-Term & Legal Consequences (3 minutes)

The nude picture gets back to Romeo... and so does word that Dale sent it to a ton of other people. Romeo looks for Julie at school the next day, but she isn't there. He starts to get worried that she skipped because of everything that is happening with the picture. He knows Julie will probably get upset with him, but he tells the football coach what has happened. It's eating him up inside that all this started after he showed the first picture of Julie in her bra to his friend. He can't imagine how uncomfortable she must feel.



The football coach tells Romeo that what has happened is known as “sextortion.” He reports the sextortion incident to the proper authorities the very same day.

Less than a week after Julie sent the initial bra shot to Romeo, Dale is charged with a felony for the solicitation, possession and distribution of childhood pornography. He is added to the registered sex offender list. He will be required to disclose his sex offender status on every college application and job application for the rest of his life. His full-ride football scholarship to a great university is revoked, and he spends time in jail. When he is released, he is unable to rent an apartment or purchase a home because of the record.



The other football players on the team are charged according to their ages and their level of involvement in the incident. Some, who like Dale are 18 and forwarded the picture to others, receive felonies and are added to the sex offender list. The football players under 18 receive misdemeanors and probation. Some of these boys have never even met Julie.

As for Julie, she becomes depressed and drops out of her current high school. Her self-esteem plummets, and sadly she loses touch with many of her former friends.

Romeo carries the guilt of having been involved at the onset of this whole situation. He sees how extreme the consequences have become for Dale and some of the other football players. He's very aware of how different Julie is now than before. Although he won't be charged legally on his permanent record, the stress of his involvement leads him to a breaking point. He commits suicide two weeks after receiving the original picture of Julie. (Romeo's story closely mimics that of a real student from Illinois.)

DISCUSSION (5 minutes)

- Who is at fault in this situation? Who is to blame?

DISCUSSION (3 minutes)

Let's work back through the story. (Focus on Phase 3.) When Dale asked Julie for a nude photo, what red flags indicated she was experiencing sextortion?

- Dale was 18 (solicitation of childhood pornography).
- Once the photo is sent, she has no way to delete it or prevent it from being distributed to others.
- Dale used threats and pressure, which are frequent indicators of sextortion behavior.
- Julie talks herself into believing Dale will stop here. False trust is always a red flag.

Were you aware that the legal consequences can be so extreme for sextortion? What do you know about sextortion laws?

DISCUSSION (3 minutes)

Let's back up a little further. (Focus on Phase 2.) From whom could Julie have sought support after Dale asked for the nude picture? Why do you think she didn't seek support? What would have happened if she had sought support instead of sending the nude to Dale?

What would have happened if one of the football players who received Julie's nude had reported it to authorities? Why do you think that didn't happen?

DISCUSSION (3 minutes)

Let's back up to the beginning. (Focus on Phase 1.) Why did Romeo ask for the picture in the first place? Why did Julie send it? What red flags did they both miss?

- Romeo didn't ask for a photo directly but led her there with his ab shot. He justified in his head that she was in control of whether or not she sent the photo. He justified that it wasn't like he was pressuring her to have sex. Justification is usually a red flag.
- Julie felt like she was expected to send a revealing picture prior to dating Romeo since that is the social norm at her high school.
- All photos can be saved and/or shared. The pressure and false trust is less intense in this phase of the story, but it is still indicative of potential harm.

From whom could Julie have sought support when she was feeling uncomfortable about sending the first bra shot? Why didn't she? What would have happened if she had sought support instead of sending the bra shot?

CLOSING THOUGHTS (3 Minutes)

At any point in the story, the characters could have sought support from “Trusted” people when they felt uncomfortable. If they had, the consequences likely wouldn’t have been so extreme. Use the attached framework to determine an adult who can be a “safe” person for you.

MY TRUSTED ADULTS

In the boxes below, make a list of all the adults whom you could trust to support you if you came to them with an uncomfortable situation. Keep this list in a place where you will see it often to remind you of whom you can go to for support when you need it.

AT HOME

AT SCHOOL

IN MY COMMUNITY (SCHOOL, CHURCH, ETC)

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Print these exit slips, cut along the perforated lines, and give one to each participant. Collect the slips at the end of the discussion. **Be sure to follow up with a student if he/she indicates that they would like to talk more about sextortion with a trusted adult.**

Name:	Date:	Time:
I would like to talk with a trusted adult about sextortion in the next 24 hours.	Yes	No
I would like to talk with a trusted adult about sextortion in the next week.	Yes	No
I do not feel the need to talk more about this now.	Yes	No

Name:	Date:	Time:
I would like to talk with a trusted adult about sextortion in the next 24 hours.	Yes	No
I would like to talk with a trusted adult about sextortion in the next week.	Yes	No
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